

NEW YORK
HERALD TRIBUNE

MAR 27 1964

STATINTL

NEW YORK
Herald Tribune
FOUNDED BY HORACE GREELEY, APRIL 10, 1841

16

Friday, March 27, 1964

▽

Fulbright's Topsy-Turvy Policy

Sen. Fulbright has spoken at length on foreign policy, with the laudable purpose of introducing a new flexibility into this country's relations with the world. Unfortunately, the effect of his speech is to substitute a new set of cliches for the old aphorisms of containment.

With the Arkansas Senator's statement that world situation is "complex and fluid," there can be no quarrel. Old alignments on both sides of the Iron Curtain are changing and breaking up; new forces are at work. There are novel dangers and opportunities—to approach them in the mood of 1947 would be as unfortunate as to have applied to the problems of 1947 the solutions proposed in 1944.

But when Mr. Fulbright gets down to cases—notably in respect to Cuba and Panama—he does not carry conviction. Castro's Cuba, whatever policy the United States may adopt, cannot be considered merely a "nuisance." It is a threat.

As for Panama, there are reasons behind the apparent war of semantics that divides the United States from that country. Washington simply cannot throw up the Canal for grabs, by agreeing to negotiate a new treaty. The Panamanians have been promised

too much by their own government; they would undoubtedly rejoice if negotiations were offered, but the reaction, when they discovered the necessary limits on the concessions, which could be offered, might simply make the whole situation worse.

What Sen. Fulbright apparently does not recognize is that the abandonment of the old notion of a world divided neatly into two halves means that specific American responsibilities become heavier, not lighter. If it is no longer dispersed globally, American power can and should be concentrated on areas of primary national interest. The example of France, in pursuing an independent policy, in effect forces her allies to do much the same.

It has been suggested that the Senator has inflated a trial balloon, on behalf of the Johnson administration. If so, he has pumped rather more air into the device than either the White House or the State Department can really relish. More, by taking in so much territory in its flight, the balloon awakens suspicions and creates reactions that would hamper rather than assist, in promoting genuine flexibility, a real response to the changing world scene.